

SHOWS SHUTTERED



TROY FLEECE

For years, Gerald Saul hosted screenings and other events in his garage nicknamed the YAAG (Yellow Argyle Art Garage). But then an arsonist struck on May 15. The assistant professor at the U of R's film department hopes he can rebuild. **A3**

Cathedral garage fire closes tiny alley venue for film, arts

ALEC SALLOUM

Inside a small Cathedral neighbourhood garage, Gerald Saul has held art events, film screenings and gatherings for more than a decade.

"It's been more of an art studio than a garage the last little while," said Saul an associate professor and department head of the University of Regina's film department.

The Yellow Argyle Art Garage, most commonly referred to as the YAAG, is now closed until further notice after it was scorched in what's believed to be a deliberately set fire.

Saul said on the night of May 15, around 11:30, he heard shouting from the alley behind his home.

"We rushed out there and, well, somebody set a fire behind the garage," said Saul. "And now there's major damage." According to Saul, a neighbour's security camera shows someone setting a bundle of sticks ablaze next to the garage.

As Regina Fire and Protective Services rushed to the fire, Saul did what he could with a garden hose until the professionals arrived.

"The garage is still standing but most if not all of the contents are lost," said Saul.

The YAAG had been scheduled to be the site for a projection during this week's Cathedral Village Arts Festival. During the year Saul will, on occasion, project films and projects on or in the garage.

What's important for Saul is not the garage itself — or the daunting prospect of buying lumber as prices have skyrocketed — but that there is one less space in the city for Regina locals to show their stories and for them to see themselves on screen.

"Using film as a reason to come together — that's what is most important for me," he said.

On a personal level, not having access to his YAAG community or the ability to meet with students and other filmmakers has been a blow for Saul during the pandemic.

"This has been a tough year."

On Tuesday night he readied to potentially bid farewell to the YAAG with a five-minute film, played on repeat, showing images of the night the garage burned.

People came by to watch, gather and mingle with one another at a safe distance.

"It'll probably be gone. I mean, that's up to the insurance, but the garage is in bad shape," he said.

On the night of the screening, the mood was far from sombre.

"We could finally see a few people face-to-face," he said. When people were at the screening, Saul said they were happy to see one another, happy to be back together.

Buoyed by that feeling, Saul plans to rebuild.

"I want a new space," he said "We will return, in some form or another."

alsalloum@postmedia.com

